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SUBJECT: UN SECRETARY-GENERAL FAILS TO CREATE PEACEBUILDING SUPPORT OFFICE FROM WITHIN EXISTING RESOURCES

This cable contains an action request. See paragraph 11.

¶1. (U) Summary. Following long and divisive deliberations in the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), the U.S. remains isolated in its commitment to establish a small Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) "from within existing resources," as mandated by the World Summit Outcome Document and the GA and SC resolutions that established the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). A proposal by the Secretary-General (SG) to structure a more weighty and costly PBSO reflects a significant failure by the Secretariat to fulfill the mandate provided by Member States.

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It also demonstrates a failure of the Secretariat to implement management reform through the reprioritization of resources. While there is some sympathy for our position to adhere to the use of existing resources, Member States, including our traditional budget allies, are overwhelmingly willing to provide seven new posts requested by the SG, including a position at the high level of an Assistant-Secretary-General (ASG), in order to avoid losing more time in the complicated effort to launch the PBC. The Fifth Committee began consideration of the resourcing proposal on March 15 and has gone through two rounds of extensive questions and answers with the Secretariat. Outside the Committee, USUN has initiated a round of consultations, including with the Secretariat, to seek acceptable solutions. In the end, should U.S. efforts to further redeploy resources be blocked, USUN plans to disassociate from consensus on a resolution in the Fifth Committee to finance the PBSO. End Summary.

Battle in the ACABQ

¶2. (U) Following nearly two weeks of questioning and debate in the ACABQ, the U.S. remains isolated in its position to establish the PBSO from within existing resources, as mandated by the World Summit Outcome Document and the Security Council (SC) and General Assembly (GA) resolutions that established the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on December 20. As a follow-up to implement these resolutions, the Secretary-General issued a report on February 23 for the creation of the PBSO. The SG's proposal identified eight existing posts for the office through redeployment and secondment. However, a further seven new posts (at an overall cost of \$2,805,400 for post and non-post requirements) are proposed to be financed from the Special Political Missions account. While this budgetary maneuver might technically meet the terms of "within existing resources," it is apparent to all that given the level of funding of the SPM account, further resources will indeed be required to meet the current requirements of all SPMs in ¶2006. Furthermore, the SG has proposed that the PBSO be led by an Assistant Secretary-General, thus implying a "policy-creation" role inconsistent with the mandated

"support" role. The U.S. has advocated for a Director-level position to initially lead this new office.

¶3. (U) The U.S. member of the ACABQ has repeatedly stressed the following main points:

- Member states intended the PBSO to be a small support office, that must be staffed out of existing resources;
- It will not have an operational function but, rather, the PBSO should provide support servicing for the PBC, including to: collate and analyze information related to strategies and financing for peacebuilding; prepare analytical reports on cross-cutting peacebuilding issues; record notes on the PBC's discussion for distribution;
- The PBSO will not undertake policy analysis, formulation of strategies for UN system activities, or formulation of policy guidelines or recommendations to finance peacebuilding activities;
- Regarding the proposed Peacebuilding Support Fund, that account should be managed by UNDP, rather than by the PBSO, which lacks auditors and accountants.
- The PBSO can be effectively led at the Director level and should not be staffed at a level higher than D-2. Both the level and size of the PBSO, as proposed by the SG, potentially infringe upon the prerogatives of the prospective responsibilities of members of the PBC themselves.

¶4. (SBU) Within the ACABQ, efforts to appeal to our traditional allies -- namely, Canada, the Netherlands, and Japan -- have failed to elicit support and, in some cases, even widened the gap. Although Japan agrees with the mandate to establish the PBSO from within existing resources, the Japanese ACABQ member strongly advocated for an ASG position

to lead the office, thus compromising his country's position. Canada and the Netherlands joined most all the other members of the Committee to fiercely defend the SG's proposal. They cited the need to establish the PBSO expeditiously as a more pressing concern than adherence to the mandate provided by Member States.

¶5. (SBU) Russia led the charge, and was supported by the U.S., in emphasizing that the PBSO "will not possess direct operational capacity" for peacebuilding activities. The report of the Committee is explicit in this regard. The Committee further recommended that the proposed charge against the provision for SPMs of \$2,805,400 be reduced by \$1,234,100 for the cost of accommodation, travel and consultants, which should be absorbed. Accordingly, the recommended charge against the SPM account would total \$1,571,300.

State of Play

¶6. (U) The SG's report on financing for the PBSO was formally introduced in the Fifth Committee on Wednesday, March 15, and has since been followed by two rounds of questions and answers with the Secretariat. USdel delivered a strong statement, drawing on points in paragraph 3 above, conveying our position on the PBSO and our disappointment with the SG's proposal. Based on statements by the EU, G-77 and China, CANZ and a number of other delegations, all indications are that the U.S. is isolated in our position. However, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Mexico have questioned the size and top-heaviness of the PBSO.

¶7. (U) Although USUN has approached traditional allies -- including the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Austria (on behalf of the EU) -- we have not received support for either pursuing further redeployments or for capping the leadership of the PBSO at the Director level. Only Japan and

Mexico have quietly indicated a willingness to emphasize the need for further review of the office one year after its establishment (as recommended by ACABQ). Outside the Fifth Committee, USUN has initiated consultations with France, other delegations and the Secretariat, which we will report in septel.

¶8. (U) In a regrettable commentary on Member States' lack of commitment to their own mandates and pursuit of basic management reform, the vast majority of delegations in the Fifth Committee assert that the SG has "done all that he can do" to reprogram positions (Note: only five positions are subject to redeployment in this plan, and the Secretariat recently admitted that even these five posts haven't yet been secured for redeployment.) Most all members maintain that the establishment of the PBSO should no longer be held hostage to the mandate for zero sum cost, and they are sympathetic to the Secretariat's claim that seven more posts, at the levels specified, simply cannot be found within the UN system. Furthermore, the G-77 is indicating their desire to restore cuts to non-post resources recommended by the ACABQ, and Norway is advocating a dedicated post for gender issues.

¶9. (U) Though there is overwhelming support for the quick establishment of the PBSO, some Member States are willing to acknowledge that the proposed budgeting for the office is not transparent. With respect to the funding mechanism, the G-77 has questioned the Secretariat's approach, reminding the Committee that Special Political Missions are activities of a limited nature and, therefore, the Secretariat should consider financing the PBSO as a revised appropriation. On the other hand, with the exception of the G-77, there seems to be support for ACABQ's recommended reductions for non-post resources (rental of premises, consultants and travel). Delegations are also in general agreement that the PBSO should draw on existing UN-system expertise, where possible.

¶10. (U) The Fifth Committee has a long-standing practice of operating by consensus; it does not vote on budgetary matters. Absent agreement in the Fifth Committee to explore further redeployment of posts, to lower the ASG post to the D-2 level and to narrow the scope of functions planned for the office, USUN plans to disassociate from consensus on the financing resolution for the PBSO. This unusual move would send an unequivocal signal of our disappointment and the SG's failure -- with the first new institutional product of his reform agenda -- to establish the PBSO in a manner consistent with sound practice and repeated intergovernmental mandates. Beyond the Fifth Committee, USUN will continue to work with the Secretariat and Member States to shape the mandate of this new support office to ensure that the PBSO can effectively support the valuable work of the PBC without creating another layer of potentially dysfunctional bureaucracy.

¶11. Action request: USUN requests Department to approach in capitals at the earliest possible opportunity, reminding all of the mandate agreed by heads of state in the World Summit Outcome Document (paragraph 104 of resolution 60/1), and requesting that delegations in New York adhere to the mandate that the office be established from within existing resources. Deliberation on a draft financing resolution will take place the week of March 20, with action to be taken by the GA by the end of that week or early on the week of March 27th.

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